

## Proposal would bring transplant center to state

By Jaclyn O'Malley ■ [jomalley@rgj.com](mailto:jomalley@rgj.com)

One of the biggest problems facing Nevada transplant patients is the lack of a transplant center in the state.

But an East Coast medical center this year proposed to partner with the Nevada School of Medicine in building an academic institution where doctors will perform transplants and conduct transplant research.

"It would be so much easier for patients to stay in their home surroundings while they recover. It's huge," said Dr. Trudy Larson, a Reno pediatrics professor at the Nevada medical school.

The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center is a leading organ transplant center and recognized nationally by U.S. News & World Report as a top hospital in 12 specialty areas. The proposal is the beginning stage.

Two hospitals in Las Vegas perform limited transplants: Sunrise Hospital and Medical Center does kidney transplants and University Medical Center does combined pancreas/kidney transplants. Ken Richardson, executive director of the Nevada Donor Network in Las Vegas, welcomed the possibility of a transplant center in Southern Nevada. He said the lack of a center forces patients to travel outside the state for care and that creates extra financial burdens, as well as medical and family support problems when patients have to move near the centers for pre- and post transplant care.

"We're probably one of the only metro areas of our size that does not have a transplant center," Richardson said. "It creates a whole host of burdens that others don't face when there is a center where they live."